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SUBJECT: EXPO FEVER AND THE CULT OF HAIBAO: SHANGHAI GOES ALL OUT  
FOR 2010 WORLD'S FAIR

REF: SHANGHAI 148 (ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS ON "BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE")

1. (U) Summary: Feverish preparations for Shanghai's World Expo 2010, due to begin next May 1, have taken over every corner of this city of 20 million people. The authorities have mobilized government, media, community, cultural, environmental and engineering resources to ensure a successful and "harmonious" event for 70 million expected visitors. Secretary Clinton's personal commitment to ensuring a USA Pavilion won us big points, while the pavilion groundbreaking on July 17 attracted nationwide media interest. End Summary.

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U.S. Joins the Party  
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2. (U) Official U.S. participation in the May 1 - October 31 2010 World Expo has been an open question for nearly two years, thanks to restrictions on the use of government funds that mean all money must be raised from the private sector. By this spring over 190 countries had signed up to be present at the party; we were regularly reminded that only the U.S. and Andorra remained as holdouts.

3. (U) Secretary Clinton's July 1 appointment of a U.S. Commissioner General gave the signal that the U.S. was committed to moving ahead, a commitment confirmed two weeks later with a

ceremonial groundbreaking for the USA Pavilion. Coverage of the July 17 ceremony resulted in a record 2,000 media placements, many quoting from Secretary Clinton's letter of congratulations that "The Shanghai Expo represents all that the nations of the world can accomplish when we work together, the global challenges we can meet through collective action, and the progress we can achieve through international cooperation."

14. (U) By hosting the first world's fair ever staged in China, Shanghai hopes to achieve some of the infrastructure improvements and garner some of the magic that famous fairs of yesteryear were known for. The Expo Bureau points out that the United States itself has hosted a number of historically significant world fairs, and that now is China's turn. To emphasize the event's national significance, a clock installed at Beijing's Tian'anmen Square on May 1 counts down the days left. Many news broadcasts around the country now open with the number of days left in the countdown and no official speech is complete without a nod to Expo.

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Great Expectations, Great Expenditures  
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15. (U) To host the largest Expo in history, the Chinese have budgeted more than \$4.2 billion, including \$2.6 billion for basic infrastructure construction and \$1.6 billion for Expo operations. This is nearly twice the \$2.3 billion budget for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

16. (U) City officials predict the Expo will break even and possibly make a profit from Expo construction bonds, ticket

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income and sponsorship, as well as re-use of the land after the Expo is finished. Advance tickets are on sale for \$24, with over six million already sold. The Expo expects to sell an

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additional 10 million tickets before the end of 2009 and is considering opening the fairgrounds one or two hours earlier than the planned 9 am start to accommodate the expected huge number of visitors.

17. (U) As part of the preparations, the city government is funding large scale infrastructure projects, including eight new metro lines, new roads, parks and residential areas. Shanghai officials say that the Expo will help increase Shanghai's annual GDP growth by 2 percent from 2004-2010, bring 1 million jobs and attract another \$44.1 billion of investment for other Expo related development. By issuing preferential reallocation policies, the government has relocated more than 18,000 local households and 272 companies from the Expo site to newly built locations.

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Expo Mascot Invades Shanghai  
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18. (U) "Haibao" or "sea treasure" is the trademarked mascot for the Expo and a ubiquitous component of the current Shanghai street scape. Although reportedly based on the Chinese ideograph for person (ren), Haibao reminds most Americans of a chubby blue Gumby figure, especially when plastered across huge billboards all over the city. Haibao comes in many forms and many places, from two-meter tall statues to cuddly toys, from video screens in buses, taxis, and subways to interactive online portals. A campaign calling for Haibao fans to create pictures of Haibao around the world has already attracted more than 20,000 entries, while a quote from Secretary Clinton noting that the Haibao mascot in her office is "looking forward to reports" on the progress of the USA Pavilion scored nearly 2,000 references in Chinese media coverage of the groundbreaking ceremony.

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Media Saturation  
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¶9. (U) Chinese media run multiple Expo stories daily, with Shanghai print media creating special pages to cover the seemingly inexhaustible subject. An "Expo Documentary" screened during prime time on China's most influential news channel (CCTV-1) in May; a shorter version now plays all over Asia in malls, on large screen LCDs and through the mobile handset advertising network. Hundreds of Expo-themed books, publications, brochures and CDs are available at every Shanghai bookstore and newspaper booth.

¶10. (U) SINA and QQ, China's two most influential web portals

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and social networking sites, have established special pages to promote the Expo. Mobile phone subscribers receive daily Expo news through their mobile phone service. Shanghai buses also broadcast information on the Expo every day to more than 12 million bus commuters. Global marketing includes the appointment of three famous Chinese stars - NBA giant Yao Ming, actor Jacky Chan and classical pianist Lang Lang - as Expo Ambassadors.

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A Campaign for Every Season  
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¶11. (U) Every week brings a new Expo-focused campaign aimed at spurring citizens and officials to prepare for next year's big event:

-The "Shanghai World Expo Civilization Plan of Action" seeks to eliminate bad habits such as queue-jumping, smoking in public places and jaywalking.

-An "Expo Pioneer Team" action plan calls for the 1.6 million Shanghai Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members to play a "leading role for preparing Expo".

- "Everyone should be responsible for Expo, should participate in Expo and share Expo with each other" seeks to build a "harmonious society", a current political focus of the Chinese Communist Party.

- A "Wish Words to Expo via Mobile Phone SMS" campaign has inspired thousands of mobile phone users to send messages, including Chinese poems, expressing their best wishes for the Expo.

-The "Three-Fives Days of Each Month" campaign focuses on customer service on the fifth of every month, "Environment Clean-Up Day" on the fifteenth and "Public Order Day" on the twenty-fifth.

- "Be an Expo Volunteer" attracted more than 270,000 applicants during the first month that applications were accepted.

- "Welcome EXPO, Study English" aims to make at least 50 percent of local citizens able to have simple English daily conversations with Expo guests. More than 100,000 Shanghai taxi drivers have been encouraged to study English.

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Going Green  
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¶12. (U) In line with the "Better City, Better Life" focus of the Expo (reftel), the site features environmental installations

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that will save energy and lower pollution, including rainwater collection, alternative energy facilities, and eco-vehicles. Beyond the Expo zone, Shanghai has created a traffic plan to encourage flexible working hours and implement traffic controls; the city has also announced a move to phase out 90-octane gasoline to ease air pollution and create a cleaner Expo.

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Comment  
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113. (U) The 2010 Shanghai World Expo will be the largest Expo in history and the first ever hosted by China. The USA Pavilion at the Expo provides an unprecedented opportunity to showcase American innovation and green technologies to tens of millions of visitors. In a recent Chinese public opinion survey, respondents named the U.S. pavilion as the place they most

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wanted to visit after the Chinese national pavilion. The much-heralded U.S. confirmation of participation on July 17 bought us a ticket on what China intends to be an unforgettable ride to the future.

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